

Harry Thaw's Wife on Witness Stand Reveals Secret Story of Her Life and Facts Which Led to the Killing of Stanford White by Her Husband

and, to White's studio. White met them on the stairs and took them into a room where a table was set for four people.

"The room was very gorgeous," said Mrs. Thaw. "It was beautifully decorated."

"There was another gentleman there?" asked Delmas.

"Yes."

"You must not tell his name."

"Yes, my skirts were down to my shoulders."

"You told Mr. Thaw all about this at the time he proposed to you?"

"Yes, I am repeating to you what I told Mr. Thaw at the time he first proposed to me, when he questioned me about Mr. White."

"You all sat down to luncheon in the studio?"

"Yes, and pretty soon the man who was with Mr. White got up and went away. He said he was going away on business."

Then Mr. White took me and the young lady upstairs to a room in which there was a big velvet swing. We got in the swing and he pushed us so that it flew up in the air. The swing went so high that our feet kicked through a big Japanese umbrella.

THEN A DRIVE IN THE PARK.

"This luncheon and the swinging fun was in the afternoon," went on the girl under Delmas's prompting. "After a while Mr. White's gentleman friend came back. It was suggested that we go for a drive in the Park. We told Mr. White good-bye and went downstairs. We drove around the Park together in an electric hansom—just the two of us, myself and the girl friend. Then we went to a dentist, where the girl had her teeth fixed. When I went home and told my mamma all that happened."

"The next time I saw Mr. White was after he had written a letter to my mother."

"Did you see this letter?"

"Yes."

"Did you state to Mr. Thaw in that conversation what the contents of that letter were?"

"Yes, I did."

"Afterward you became familiar with Mr. White's writing?"

"Yes."

The District-Attorney objected to this testimony, but it got in. "Mr. Thaw asked me to tell him everything," continued the witness, "and I did. This letter of Mr. White's asked my mother to call at No. 160 Fifth avenue. I remember this very distinctly. Mr. Thaw asked me to tell him what was in the letter, and I told him as much of it as I could remember."

"What else was in the letter?"

"WELL, MR. WHITE WROTE MY MOTHER THAT IF I HAD ANY TEETH WHICH NEEDED FIXING TO SEND ME TO THE DENTIST AND HE WOULD PAY THE BILL. HE TOLD MY MOTHER HE WOULD HAVE HER DENTIST'S BILLS PAID ALSO. STANFORD WHITE SAID HE HAD HAD THE TEETH FIXED OF NEARLY ALL THE GIRLS OF THE 'FLORODORA' COMPANY."

"He said," continued Mrs. Thaw, "in his letter that it was not at all unusual. The next time I saw Mr. White at the same studio where I first met him. Again we had luncheon. This was several weeks after the first luncheon."

"MY MOTHER GAVE ME A NEW DRESS FOR THIS LUNCHEON, AND A RED CAPE AND A RED HAT. I PUT ON THIS RED CAPE BECAUSE SHE SAID I WAS GOING TO A PARTY AND MUST BE NICELY DRESSED. SHE WOULDN'T TELL ME WHERE THE PARTY WAS TO TAKE PLACE."

"I was put in a cab and started away for the studio. As I was crossing Twenty-fourth street I saw a man coming out of Park & Thaw's. It was Stanford White. He put me in a hansom and drove me to Madison Square Garden. We went up in the tower to Mr. White's apartment."

"There was another young man there. We had a nice little luncheon. All Mr. White would let me have was a chocolate éclair and a glass of champagne. We stayed there having a nice time until about 12 o'clock that night, or maybe it was 1 o'clock."

THOSE TOWER PARTIES.

"I asked Mr. White to take me home to my mother, and he took me home all the way to my door and up to my mother. I told Mr. Thaw all about these parties. There were three parties like this in the tower of the Garden."

"After one of them Mr. White called on my mother and asked her if she did not want to go to Pittsburgh and visit her friends. My mother said she couldn't bear to go away and leave me alone in New York. Mr. White told her to go ahead and have a nice time and he would look after me and see that nothing happened to me."

"THEN MAMMA WENT TO PITTSBURG. THE DAY AFTER SHE LEFT MR. WHITE SENT A CARRIAGE FOR ME. HE TELEPHONED THAT I WAS TO COME TO HIS STUDIO IN EAST TWENTY-SECOND STREET AND HAVE SOME PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN. I GOT DRESSED ABOUT 10 O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING."

"I went down to the carriage door and drove to the studio. When I got there the door opened by itself. I think this was in September, 1901. I went upstairs to the studio. Mr. White was there. There was another man there I knew on the top landing. In the studio there was another man whom I also knew, one a photographer."

"Did you tell Mr. Thaw what took place in that studio?"

"Yes, I told him all about it. In the studio was a lot of clothing, including a gorgeous kimono. They told me to dress up in the things and they photographed me many times. I posed until I got very tired."

WANTED TO HELP HER DRESS.

"Then Mr. White told the other man to go out and get something to eat. We had a lunch then, after I had put on my street dress in a private room and Mr. White and I had our lunch together. The others had gone. The photographer and the other man had both disappeared. Mr. White gave me only one glass of champagne. Then he sent me home. Nothing had happened except that while I was dressing he had called to me to ask if I needed any help in dressing. I said no."

"The next night Mr. White asked me to come to a party in his studio in West Twenty-fourth street. I went there after the theatre. There was no one there except Mr. White. He said the others had thrown him down."

"That's too bad," I said, "for now we cannot have any party."

"Oh, yes," he said, "you stay. I want you to see the rest of this apartment. There are three very pretty rooms." We went into one room where there was a piano. I sat down at the piano and played a little. Then he took me into another room—a bedroom. In this room there was a little table on which there was a little bottle of champagne. He gave me one glass.

"HE SHOWED ME ALL AROUND THE ROOM, WHICH WAS FULL OF CURIOUS AND STRANGE THINGS. WHEN WE GOT THROUGH LOOKING AT THE THINGS HE SAID, 'WHY DON'T YOU DRINK THE CHAMPAGNE?' I SAID, 'I DON'T WANT IT.' HE SAID, 'YOU DRINK IT.' SO I DRANK IT. THEN THERE CAME A DRUMMING IN MY EARS. EVERYTHING BEGAN TO SWIM AROUND ME. AFTER THAT EVERYTHING TURNED BLACK."

WHITE'S OBJECT GAINED.

"When I came to again, I was in the bed all undressed. My clothes were all scattered. Mr. White was alongside of me. He was entirely undressed. I began to scream. He jumped up and put on a big kimono. There were mirrors all around the room. I screamed and screamed. He begged me to be quiet."

"As I got out of the bed, I began to scream more than ever. I screamed and screamed."

"Where was Mr. White when you regained consciousness?"

"He was in the bed beside me."

"When you got out of bed, what did Mr. White do?"

"He got out, got down on the floor and took the hem of my dress and kissed it and told me not to mind. He said he couldn't help it. I was so tired and young and slim. He said that only young and pretty girls were like that. He told me that I must never get fat, as he did not like fat girls. He said they were loathsome. I asked him if everybody did as he had done. He said yes. He told me that it was all that made life worth liv-

ing, but that I must always keep quiet about ourselves. He told me I was so sweet and pretty that he had been unable to keep away from me, and that he loved me."

WHITE'S SPECIOUS ARGUMENTS.

"He made me swear that I must never tell my mother. He said I must never talk about it. He said some of the girls in the theatre were foolish and talked about it. He said women in society were clever. They knew that the secret of getting along was to never get found out. I must be just as clever. He said he would always be good to me. He kept me there all night talking like that. I would keep screaming, but he would quiet me and tell me everything was all right."

BY THIS TIME DOZENS IN THE COURT-ROOM WERE SOBBING. HARRY THAW, WITH HIS FACE IN HIS HANDKERCHIEF, WAS WEeping ALoud. HIS SHOULDERS SHOOK AND HIS HANDS TREMBLED. AGONY WAS WRITTEN DEEP IN EVERY LINE OF THE WIFE'S FACE, BUT SHE BROKE DOWN ONLY ONCE.

"What was the effect on Mr. Thaw when you told him all this?" said Mr. Delmas.

"HE BROKE DOWN AND SOBBED AND WEPT," RAN ON MRS. THAW, HERSELF HALF-SOBBING. "HE CLINCHED HIS HANDS BEFORE HIS FACE AND BIT HIS NAILS, CRYING, 'THE COWARD, THE COWARD!' WE SAT UP ALL NIGHT WHILE I TOLD HIM ALL ABOUT THIS."

"Did he say anything about your mother?"

"Yes; he said that she ought to have known better than allow me to take flowers and presents from an old married man and then go out with him."

"Did Mr. Thaw persist in his request that you marry him?"

"YES, ABOUT TWO MONTHS AFTER I TOLD HIM ALL THIS HE AGAIN URGED ME TO BECOME HIS WIFE. HE SAID IT WASN'T MY FAULT, THAT I HAD BEEN DECEIVED BY MR. WHITE, AND THAT HE CONSIDERED ME AS GOOD AND PURE AS IF I HAD NEVER MET HIM."

"He told Mr. Thaw that even if I did marry him friends of Stanford White would always laugh at him and sneer at him. I told him some of the girls at the theatre had already said mean things about me. I said: 'Harry, I can't marry you because I am a ruined girl. As soon as I am well of this operation I have just undergone I will learn to dance and go back on the stage.' Harry told me that I must not feel so badly. He told me that all women were not loose in their lives; that there were many decent women in society, and that if I married him he would always treat me well and see that no one ever harmed or hurt me again. He said his life would be ruined unless I married him."

"Did you at that time give him a history of your life up to the time you met Stanford White?"

"Yes, I told him of all my life."

AWFUL STRUGGLE AGAINST POVERTY.

The witness then said she had been born near Pittsburgh, up the Allegheny River. Her father had died when she was still a young girl. They were very poor.

They had no money at all, their furniture was all seized by the sheriff, and they went to live with their grandmother, where they all slept in one room. The witness's mother had borrowed money. From Pittsburgh, while she was still a very young girl, they went to Philadelphia.

"My mother was a very poor girl. She was a designer, but not one would hire her because she had never been to Paris and did not know the styles. We were awfully poor. Sometimes we hardly had enough to eat. It was a mighty hard struggle to get along. For days we only had biscuits."

Harry Thaw had stopped weeping. His wife was now calmer too. There were tortured lines in her drawn, pitiable face, and there were unutterable words of paths in her vibrant, shaking voice.

Evelyn was taken to a Mr. Dain, in Philadelphia, an artist, who wanted to paint a picture of her, and while she was posing another artist came in, who wanted her to pose. There were still other artists who appealed to her to pose for them, saying she could make good money and that there was no disgrace about it. She was sent to four women artists and two men artists, also to a photographer. The girl had been paid for posing and had turned the money over to her mother. The money practically supported the family, although at times the stepfather won some money on the stock market.

Leaving Philadelphia, the family went back to Allegheny, where they lived in one little back room and had a very hard time of it.

WENT HUNGRY AT TIMES.

"Sometimes," said Mrs. Thaw, "we did not have half enough to eat. We were badly off when my mother took my photograph to Carroll Beckwith. He posed me for a few weeks. Then he told me I was not the sort of a girl that ought to be knocking about from one artist's studio to the other. He told me he would give me letters to some reputable, honest artists in New York, who would treat me kindly and give me work to do where I would be in no danger of mistreatment."

"We came to New York and lived in one room. I got work posing for photographers. I would make \$17 or \$18 a week, and would give it all to my mother to pay our bills. I never kept a cent for myself. The money earned was all we had to take care of all three of us—my mother, my brother and myself. One day a reporter for The World came to see me. I don't know where he found out about me. He wrote a piece in the paper about me, and after that other reporters came to see me, and they had pictures of me in The World and The Herald. That was in 1900."

HOW SHE GOT IN THE CHORUS.

The girl went on to tell that she was then begged by reporters who wanted her photographs. They were published, and a Mr. Marx called on her and said he would give her a job in the "Florodora" company. He gave her a letter to Mr. Fisher, but when Evelyn called on him he said, "This is not a baby-ferm. I can't take you." "I cried at this, for I wanted to make \$15 extra a week, and with the \$18 I was earning at posing, I thought we could get along nicely. I kept on crying, and he finally took me, though he said I shouldn't tell any one how old I was."

"By posing and acting in the chorus I was now earning about \$32 a week, but all of it went to my mother."

"When you first met Stanford White, did you tell him that you had posed, and how the artists were?" asked the prisoner's attorney.

"Yes, I told him all about my posing, and he said the artists were a lot of studs. He said they were old fogies and no good at all. He spoke of them all the time as old studs."

THE MEETING WITH THAW.

"When did you first meet Harry Thaw?"

"He came late in 1901, while I was in the chorus. He called on us at the Hotel Audubon, where we were living, and told my mother that he had begun to care for me. He offered to send me abroad to have my voice trained. He also offered to send me to school. We did not accept his offer. I next saw Mr. Thaw in 1902. He called to see us and said he had been in Europe. He again offered to send me and my brother to school, saying I was too young to be on the stage. In the meanwhile Mr. White had been sending me to school in New Jersey. While I was there I was taken ill and had to be operated upon. This was in 1902."

"While I was in bed very ill Mr. Thaw came to see me. I was in the hospital. The doctors were there. They said they would have to give me ether in order to see what was the matter with me. I was too weak to speak and the doctor said I was very ill. Mr. Thaw heard what they said and said I was in a serious condition."

"Were you taking pills at any time so that you had to go to the hospital for this operation?"

"When was that?"

"In the early part of 1902."

"When did you go to school?"

"In 1902."

"Mr. Thaw had offered to send you and your brother to school?"

"Yes."

"You were very sick?"

"Yes, I was. Harry came into my room and sat down beside my bed. He took my hand and kissed it. He said he was very sorry for me. This was just before I went under the effect of the ether. He was the last person I saw except the doctor."

Evelyn now said that the defendant sent her lots of delicacies while she was in the hospital, chickens and sweet things. She began to get well in May, when Thaw made arrangements for her and her mother to go to Europe. They returned from the other side in October.

Mr. Delmas interrupted the testimony to offer in evidence several letters in the handwriting of the defendant.

LETTERS ARE HELD UP.

Mr. Jerome objected strenuously to the admission of these letters. Delmas argued that the letters should be admitted, as they referred to statements the witness had told of making to Mr. Thaw. The letters from Thaw, Mr. Delmas said, proved that she had told him the story as she related it on the stand. Mr. Delmas said: "If it was proper to admit the fact that the defendant said after the shooting, 'He has ruined my wife,' as an indication of his state of mind, this letter is surely admissible."

The Court consented to have the missives marked for identification and argue the legal points later.

Then Mr. Delmas asked for an adjournment out of consideration for

his Thaw and also to allow him to look up some authorities.

The District-Attorney graciously consented to the proposal, remarking: "The justice of the great witness has suffered has been dreadfully injured, and for her sake we would urge a reprieve."

THE DISTRICT-ATTORNEY THEN WAVED TO MRS. THAW TO LEAVE THE STAND. SHE TOTTERED TO HER SEAT AND FOR A FULL MINUTE SWAYED BACK AND FORTH BEFORE SHE WAS ABLE TO FIND THE STEPS LEADING DOWN TO THE PLATFORM. ASSISTANT DISTRICT-ATTORNEY GARVY CAUGHT HER ARM AND HELPED HER DOWN. THEN, WITH ONE HAND GRIPPING FOR SUPPORT, SHE STUMBLED BEHIND THE JURY BOX TOWARD THE DOOR OF THE JUSTICE'S CHAMBER. AT THE DOOR SHE FELL FORWARD INTO THE ARMS OF ONE OF HER HUSBAND'S COUSINS, WHO REPORTED HER TO A SEAT, ON WHICH SHE SANK IN UTTER COLAPSE. SO WEAK THAT HER SOBS WERE INK-SMOTHERED GROANS.

She recovered quickly, however, and went out to lunch with an escort of lawyers, the police driving a lane for them through the pack in the corridor.

TWICE NEAR BREAKDOWN.

Twice the girl-wife had been on the raw edge of a collapse—once when she told the listening audience the story of her ruin in the gilded den on Twenty-fourth street and once as her own words brought back to her the memories of the days when she, a shabby, lovely, unspooled, innocent child was buffeted about from studio to stage door, from photograph gallery to ball bedroom, the sole breadwinner of a needy, greedy household.

But now, with the worst over, perhaps, she sat erect, a black-browed, plucky, sad-faced little woman, with the droop of childhood still in her lips and the knowledge of centuries in her black eyes, with the olive shade about them. The two hours' ordeal had borne her down as with a lingering illness. One could almost see the lines deepening in her face.

THAW ALSO BROKE DOWN.

The ordeal that worn down the prisoner to almost a state of collapse. When he got to his feet to leave the court-room his face was ashen gray, but his hands went up to his forehead and he gripped his temples. He also was swaying as if about to fall, and for an instant did not feel the pressure of the Deputy Sheriff's arm at his elbow. Leaving the tribunal he walked with wavering steps like a man suddenly dazed by a blow.

Not a person in the thronged tribunal moved or even breathed a whisper until the Thaws had disappeared. Then a prodigious sigh rose up. Slowly and silently every one got to his feet and amid a solemn hush moved out through the portals into the buzzing rotunda.

Second Chapter in the Ordeal of Mrs. Thaw.

For the afternoon session the chamber was crowded until it wouldn't hold another pinpoint. But for every favored human who got past the warders of the door, there was a full score who didn't have the password and who wandered the corridors, disconsolately begging the policemen of the outer line to let them by.

Back to the stand came Evelyn Thaw, pale as ever, and holding herself rigidly in hand as if to keep within her hysteria which cried for utterance. The second chapter of the epic of a girl's ruin was about to be unrolled like a scroll under the skillful handling of Delmas and Jerome.

GOOD EFFECT ON THAW.

Thaw seemed cheered slightly, although the little demons of nervousness danced their twitching dance in his temples. These little tremors running through his face were as constant and as fleeting as sheet-lightning on an August night. He did not look to where his wife sat, her soul fortified with courage and pluck for the final trials of the inquisition. His lawyers had told him at the noon recess of the evident impression which Evelyn Thaw's testimony had made upon the jurors during the forenoon and the news had exhilarated him.

As for the little blue-clad witness, she looked very much alone, very small and very weak, yet very brave, as she waited for the lawyers to have an end of their wearisome discussion and come to the business in hand.

THAW'S LETTERS IN EVIDENCE.

Mr. Delmas started in to argue for the admission of the prisoner's letters to his wife, when he was cut short by Mr. Jerome who withdrew his early objection. Thaw's counsel then passed one of the letters to the prosecutor who read it over carefully.

Mrs. Thaw looked wistfully about her now and then, letting her glance fall finally on the jury box.

After the District-Attorney had finished his perusal of the letter, it was marked in evidence and passed back to Mr. Delmas. Thaw's lawyer then read from a typewritten copy of the missive. It was addressed to Mr. Longfellow, an attorney for Thaw. In this letter Thaw said it cost him \$1,000 to keep Mrs. Holman (Evelyn's mother) in London.

He wrote:

"EVELYN CANNOT REMAIN WITH THE MOTHER BECAUSE OF HER SUPERHUMAN NEGLIGENCE WHICH WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR HER DAUGHTER FALLING INTO THE HANDS OF A BLACK-GUARD WHO SUBJECTED HER TO AWFUL HORRORS WHEN SHE WAS ONLY FIFTEEN YEARS OLD."

The defendant wrote that Mrs. Holman feared that he (Thaw) "would kidnap her seventeen-and-a-half-year-old daughter." He added:

WILL HATE SOME OTHER.

"When she learns the true facts she will turn her hate elsewhere."

He asked Mr. Longfellow to telephone Mrs. Holman or Miss Simonton at the Hotel Algonquin and learn their side of the row and cable him fully about it.

The first letter was disconnected, rambling and badly phrased. Much of it was almost without meaning because of Thaw's weird style of composition.

A second letter written by the prisoner to Attorney Longfellow was put in evidence after Mr. Jerome had studied it closely. Then the counsel for the defense read from a typewritten sheet of Thaw's correspondence.

JEROME WINS A POINT.

The District-Attorney objected to the second letter, as it was not proven on what date it had been written. Mr. Jerome argued that it must be shown that the epistle was written before the killing of White.

Mr. Delmas said that the letter would show that Thaw was insane, laboring under a delusion that still exists.

"Even were this letter written only yesterday," said Mr. Delmas, "it would have its force as evidence to establish the unreasonableness of the defendant's mind. Though I can show that this letter was written at the time I indicate (prior to the slaying), it is not necessary to do so."

The prosecutor did not see it in this way and there was a tedious debate. The Court sustaining Mr. Jerome. Thereupon Mr. Delmas withdrew the letter and tentatively proffered another letter, which was likewise objected to by the District-Attorney.

Through all this Evelyn Thaw sat bolt upright with one slender hand to her lips, as if puzzling her brain to know what all the wearing tangle of words might mean. She looked very much a grammar-school girl caught with her lessons unlearned. And yet, how many lessons had this black-eyed girl learned in her twenty-three years—lessons of want and plenty, of avarice and opulence, of tinsel fame and gilded shame, of guileless and guilt—all the lessons that those evil teachers, Temptation and Vice, can teach if the pupil have but innocence and be needy and in want and have no protection.

TRIED TO SHIELD MOTHER.

Nothing that Evelyn Thaw had said or done on the stand during the morning session made a stronger impression than her seeming inclination to save her mother's name as far as possible from besmirchment in the shameful transaction of her downfall. She had plainly grieved over Mrs. Holman's share in the intrigue of Stanford White and his Room of Many Mirrors. This feeble, perhaps futile attempt of the child to keep the parent's figure in the background of the shameful thing had helped, along with home conviction at the least to the hearts of her hearers.

Bedraggled pawn of misfortune and misery, Evelyn Thaw may have been, but in this second great crisis of her life the innate sweetness of her personality had stood forth to-day as a gleaming gem in a muck-heap. The second letter was excluded. The witness said that Thaw had begun writing to her since 1903 and had sent her a great many letters.

"Have you noticed," inquired Mr. Delmas, "whether your husband's handwriting has undergone a visible change?"

This question was opposed by the Prosecutor, who argued that Mrs.

Thaw was not an expert. The defendant's lawyer was endeavoring to bring in the excluded letter through Evelyn's testimony. He failed.

Mr. Delmas then said that the letter for the time being. He said it would offer it in evidence later, when Mr. Longfellow, to whom it was written, could be called to testify that he received it the day of the murder.

THE RETURN FROM EUROPE.

"You returned from Europe late in 1903?" asked Delmas.

"Yes, I came back before Mr. Thaw did. I reached New York on the steamship late in October. Before I left Europe Mr. Thaw told me Mr. Longfellow, his lawyer, would meet me at the pier to see that I got by the customs officers. I brought Mr. Longfellow a letter from Mr. Thaw."

"When did you see Mr. Thaw after you arrived in New York?"

"Several weeks. About a month, I think."

"Where did you see him?"

"At the Hotel Navarre."

"What took place at that time?"

"I did not see him alone. I would not see him alone, and he knew it."

"Therefore he came to see you in company of another person?"

"A man we were with him."

"What was the conversation?"

"Mr. Thaw came in and sat down beside me on a trunk. The other man went over by the window. I asked him not to leave the room. This man was a lawyer of reputation in this city."

"What did he say?"

"HEARD EVIL THINGS OF HIM."

"HE ASKED ME WHAT WAS THE MATTER. I SAID THAT I DIDN'T CARE TO SPEAK TO HIM, THAT I HAD HEARD TERRIBLE THINGS ABOUT HIM. I TOLD HIM I HAD HEARD CERTAIN STORIES ABOUT HIM THAT WERE VERY, VERY DREADFUL. I TOLD HIM THAT A CERTAIN MAN HAD TOLD ME HE CHOKED A GIRL IN A BATH-TUB AND POURED SCALDING WATER OVER HER. THAT HE WAS CRAZY, THAT HE TOOK MORPHINE AND THAT HE WAS IN THE HABIT OF TYING GIRLS TO BEDPOSTS AND BEATING THEM."

THAW CALLED HER ANGEL.

"What did he say then?"

"He said, 'Poor little Evelyn. They have been making a fool of you!'"

The witness said that she told Thaw she had gone to Abe Hummel's office where documents were shown her purporting to be papers in a suit brought against Thaw by a girl he had abused.

"You told him about this visit to the lawyer's office?" queried Mr. Delmas.

"Yes," responded the witness.

"He said that it was only an effort of Stanford White to blackmail him. He told me not to pay any attention to it."

"Was that all?"

"Yes, that was all of the conversation."